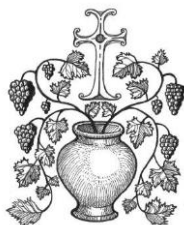


Human beings have accumulated in their coffers gold and silver, clothes more sumptuous than useful, diamonds and other objects that are evidence of war and tyranny; then a foolish arrogance hardens their hearts; for their brothers in distress, no pity. What utter blindness! . . . Attend not to the law of the strong but to the law of the Creator. Help nature to the best of your ability, honour the freedom of creation, protect your species from dishonour, come to its aids in sickness, rescue it from poverty Seek to distinguish yourself from others only in your generosity. Be like gods to the poor, imitating God's mercy. Humanity has nothing so much in common with God as the ability to do good.

Saint Gregory the Theologian



**14 June 2015 is the
Second Sunday of Matthew**

Matins Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: Romans 2:10-16

Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, and while soldiers were guarding your most pure Body, you rose, O Saviour, on the third day, giving life to the world. Therefore the heavenly Powers cried out to you, Giver of life: Glory to your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to your Kingdom! Glory to your dispensation, only lover of humankind!

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Romans 7:1-14; Matthew 9:36-38; 10:1-8
Prophet Amos; Father Hieronymus

Tuesday: Romans 7:14-8:2; Matthew 10:9-15
Tychon the Wonderworker; 40 Martyrs of Rome

Wednesday: Romans 8:2-13; Matthew 10:16-22
Martyr Isaurus & Companions; Martyrs Manuel, Sabel & Ismael

Thursday: Romans 8:22-27; Matthew 10:23-31
Martyr Leontius & Companions

Friday: 1 Jude 1:1-25; John 14:21-24
Apostle Jude; Martyr Zosima

Saturday: Romans 3:28-31; 4:1-3; Matthew 7:24-29; 8:1-4
Hieromartyr Methodios; Father Callistus



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

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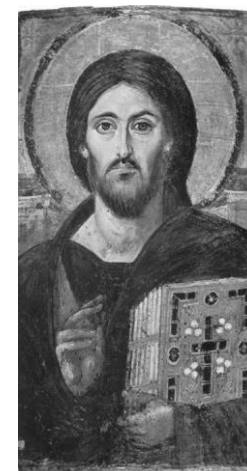
**Archbishopric of Good Hope
Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa**

Come, Follow Me

Today, on the second Sunday after Pentecost we begin to hear Gospel readings from St Matthew's Gospel that will take us through some of the key incidents in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

In today's Gospel we see how shortly after the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, He calls the first Apostles to follow Him and to participate in His mission. We are not told much about these men, except that they were fishermen. In other words, they were fairly ordinary people, and certainly not from the well-off or educated classes. And yet, we are told that it is these ordinary fishermen who will become co-workers with Christ and that they will in fact become "fishers of men."

We know with hindsight that these humble fishermen were transformed by Christ's teaching, and by the power of His death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, to become great missionaries and, in many cases, martyrs for the faith. Yet at the time, it must have seemed far from obvious.



The call to follow Christ was not only addressed to the Apostles in first century Palestine, but it is addressed to each one of us today. We might feel that we are insignificant or inadequate, yet the history of the Church shows us that God can use ordinary people, if they allow themselves to respond to His call. We are not all called to become wandering preachers, but each of us is called by God. We may not all be asked to leave our fishing nets and families, yet there may be things that we need to be prepared to lay aside, in order to focus our gaze more closely on Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of God has no price tag on it: It is worth as much as you have. For Zacchaeus it was worth half of what he owned, because the other half that he had unjustly pocketed he promised to restore fourfold. For Peter and Andrew it was worth the nets and vessel they had left behind; for the widow it was worth two copper coins; for another it was worth a cup of cold water. So, as we have said, the Kingdom of Heaven is worth as much as you have.

Saint Gregory Dialogos

The Healing of Soul and Body

A series on the meaning of Holy Unction

We saw last week that healing is central to the Orthodox understanding of salvation and that the specific practice of anointing the sick and praying for their healing dates from the time of the Apostles. This is the Sacrament or Mystery of Holy Unction, one of the services of the Church through which Jesus Christ's healing power is mediated to us today. It is usually celebrated on Great and Holy Wednesday, but can also be conducted at other times.



The Gathering of the Church

Although the Mystery of Holy Unction can be served for individuals, its structure shows that it involves a gathering of the whole Church. It should ideally be served by seven priests and as many of the faithful as possible. There are seven Epistle readings, seven Gospel readings, seven prayers, and seven anointings with oil that is specifically blessed for the service. While the service cannot always be carried out in this full way, its structure points to a symbolic completeness and reminds us that healing is never just a private thing between an individual and God. Instead, it involves the gathering of the Church, reminding us that the whole Church is praying for the sick.

The service consists of Psalms, readings, and prayers that are offered on behalf of the sick person, asking both for forgiveness and for the sanctification of the oil to be used. After this, the priest anoints the parishioner(s) on the forehead, eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, chest, and hands, saying:

The blessing of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ: for the healing of the soul and body of the servant of God, [name], always: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

Sometimes it is thought that this Sacrament is only for those who are near death, but that is not the case. While some people have specific ailments, which may cause them to ask to be anointed, we are all sick in either body, mind, or spirit and are therefore all in need of healing. By participating in this Mystery we come into contact with Christ's healing presence and are reminded that His Church is a healing shrine that is pervaded by the prayers of the clergy and the faithful.



Human nature is defiled for the sake of the boundless compassion of the Son of God; and its sins are purified; the defiled are sanctified. The ailing are healed. Upon those in dishonour are boundless honour and glory bestowed. Those in darkness are enlightened by the Divine light of grace and reason.

Saint John of Kronstadt

The Apostles' Fast

This past Monday marked the beginning of the Apostles' Fast, which we keep from the second Monday after Pentecost until the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul on 29 June. This fast dates back to the very early centuries of the Church and was already known in the fourth century.



Like the other fasts of the Church, this fast is intended to help us to simplify our lives and to remain vigilant. By helping us to distinguish between what we really need and what we want, it enables us to devote more time to prayer and to give to the poor. Moreover, fasting helps us become strong in our faith so that we can withstand the attacks of the enemy. As Saint Isaac the Syrian writes:

... this weapon has indeed deprived the devil of strength from the outset... As soon as the devil sees someone possessed of this weapon (fasting), fear straightway falls on this adversary and tormentor of ours, who remembers and thinks of his defeat by the Saviour in the wilderness; his strength is at once destroyed and the sight of the weapon given us by our Supreme Leader burns him up. A man armed with the weapon of fasting is always afire with zeal. He who remains therein, keeps his mind steadfast and ready to meet and repel all violent passions.

The Fast of the Apostles is justly established in their honour, for through them we have received numerous benefits and for us they are exemplars and teachers of the fast ... For one week after the descent of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Apostolic Constitution composed by Clement, we celebrate, and then during the following week, we fast in honour of the Apostles.

Saint Symeon of Thessalonica

For beginners prayer is like a joyous fire kindled in the heart; for the perfect it is like a vigorous sweet-scented light.

Or again, prayer is the preaching of the Apostles, an action of faith or, rather, faith itself, 'that makes real for us the things for which we hope' (Hebrews. 11:1) ...

the heart's assurance, hope of salvation, a sign of purity, a token of holiness, knowledge of God,

baptism made manifest, purification in the water of regeneration, a pledge of the Holy Spirit,

the exultation of Jesus, the soul's delight, God's mercy, a sign of reconciliation, the seal of Christ,

a ray of the noetic sun, the heart's daystar, the confirmation of the Christian faith, the disclosure of reconciliation with God ...

Why say more? Prayer is God, who accomplishes everything in everyone (1 Corinthians 12:6), for there is a single action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, activating all things through Christ Jesus.

Saint Gregory of Sinai